

THE PARISH THEATRE

WITH A DESCRIPTIVE LIST OF PLAYS

*** JOHN TALBOT SMITH ***

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THE PARISH THEATRE

THE PARISH THEATRE

A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF ITS RISE, ITS
PRESENT CONDITION, AND ITS PROSPECTS

TO WHICH IS ADDED

A DESCRIPTIVE LIST OF ONE HUNDRED CHOICE PLAYS
SUITABLE FOR THE PARISH THEATRE

BY

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THE PARISH THEATRE

CHAPTER I

A NEW INSTITUTION

Most people will be astonished, and not a few scandalized, at the title of this booklet. Parish and theatre are contradictory terms for many; to associate them may sound like flat blasphemy. Perhaps this is the first occasion for using the phrase, The Parish Theatre. Yet the institution itself exists, has been in existence, in this country for half a century at least, in the old world, off and on perhaps since parishes began to be; but it had no particular name, and because of that fact perhaps few people were aware of its existence. Now that it is properly baptized, with its name inscribed in the register, its personality may take on proportions.

It will be recognized at once by the experienced as a department of another institution known as the Amateur Theatre. Within the last thirty years most Americans have become acquainted with the amateur theatre, either as amateur actors or the admiring audience. This is not to speak flippantly. Actually

the amateur theatre fills a large and important place in a million communities. It trains actors, dramatists and managers for the professional stage, has its own drama and audiences and methods, and makes considerable money. In the early ages it made the soil out of which the modern drama grew. Even in our sophisticated time, the professional theatre, grown stale through use, convention and commercialism, returns to the amateur institution to drink of the pure, original spring, to be renewed and rejuvenated; and afterwards goes forth, like an old sport from the baths of Nauheim or Hot Springs, to become as dissolute and hopeless as before.

To make light of the amateur theatre is to affront the origins. It is true that in the amateur drama pistols fail to go off at the right moment, and the villains are put to it to die a proper death before their admiring friends; we have all seen the hero, who should have been shot from the tower, fall upon his own sword and die a shameful death because the gun inside would not go off; we have all heard the treasure flung into the lake, as it missed the water tank, fall with a dull thud on the planking, while the nervous actor exclaimed, "it is safe in the bosom of the sea forever"; we have seen wigs come off with cavalier hats in the presence of the queen, and gorgeous moustachios adhere to the cheek of the lady saluted; one may laugh at these accidents, but one may not laugh at the amateur theatre and its ardent supporters.

In the first place, it has a long and curious history.

Although there are no documents to support the statement, it is likely that amateur drama began with amateur man, that is, when Adam and Eve and their descendants had their first tussle with a contradictory world. Life is strange enough now after an experience of thousands of years! What must it not have been when entirely new! And since humor is innate in man, and mimicry its first and most natural expression, the amateur drama probably began with the human race. The first parents told the story of their life in Eden, and the amateur dramatists and actors turned it into a play for the benefit of the old folks.

In this fashion the drama began among the peoples who kept records. When the first Christians undertook the abolition of the professional stage among the Greeks and Romans, they found the task impossible. The people would not give up the pleasures of the theatre. It took five hundred years and the invasion of the northern barbarians to annihilate the ancient stage. The Christian leaders then fought the professional theatre with the amateur theatre. They founded a Christian stage of a highly religious character, wrote plays for it, trained both actors and audiences, and thus made the amateur theatre an institution. This historic beginning entitles the amateur theatre at all times to respect.

Out of this institution sprang the theatre of the Middle Ages. No one is ignorant of the process by which the professional stage came into existence. The famous miracle and morality plays, the plays of

the ancient guilds, colleges and other corporate bodies, belong to the amateur theatre. It is not necessary to discuss the matter, the books are so full of it. I just wish to prove the respectable antiquity of the amateur institution, now so looked down upon by the professional, and so little esteemed by the mass of the people that they hardly recognize its existence. It is barely tolerated, as an indoor sport for a certain class of people.

With its antiquity and its persistence, in spite of ridicule, the amateur theatre deserves attention and study. Why has it been so persistent? With the professional theatre in every town, with the motion picture drama so universal and cheap, how does the amateur theatre continue to hold its own, to lose its moustachios and wigs, to have its guns kill the wrong man or miss fire, and to attract thousands to its service? Because the human race loves to act, or loves the art of mimicry, just as much today as in the time of Noah. It is a form of recreation, what the wits call an indoor sport, which some people like to perform and others like to see. It is irrepressible. For many profound reasons I am inclined to think it is providential.

The regular theatre has outlived the condemnation of churchmen as lofty and profound as Bossuet, who practically condemned all forms of the drama, unless those which portrayed virtue. He was afraid the virus of life, sin, would secure a double influence if the drama portrayed life. His fear was not misplaced,

but the corrective lay not in the abolition of the drama, but in its proper direction. Time has proved that the institution called the Theatre is ineradicable. The people take it up spontaneously. Mimicry is natural and spontaneous. It is the root of the drama. It is the acting as well as the telling of the story.

All over Europe since 1850 the amateur theatre has experienced a revival. Lovers of acting, of dramatic writing, of stage production, have combined to present plays which never could have found a place in the professional theatre. Audiences have patronized them because they liked that sort of drama. The professional stage has become, through commercialism and other limitations, exceedingly narrow and stiff. It seems to be in the hands of managers who are built on the model of the famous man-milliners of Paris. They are given to variety rather than dramatic merit. They follow the crude tastes of a public which never knows what it wants, except to be pleased or dazzled like children. The professional drama therefore becomes monotonous in its sensationalism. Its fashions have a certain run, and while the run is on nothing else can get before the public.

At one time it is romantic costume drama, at another realistic of the Zola type, then drama in which crime and criminals are the substance, again domestic drama of a foolish sentimentality. Immense fortunes have been made with plays of each type. Consequently speculators and adventurers have entered the field, and the same methods as distinguish the money

market and the food market are used to corner the dramatic supply. One set of men secures a chain of theatres from New York to California, and levies taxes on plays and players. In the vaudeville business for example the criminal methods of the trusts have reduced the rank and file of the players to the condition of near-slaves.

This stiffness and narrowness of commercialism, however, have helped in the revival of the amateur drama. In Europe all kinds of theatres have sprung into existence. Paris has two in particular which cater to the tastes of children and young people in general, producing unconventional plays, religious dramas, and at stated times plays of the Passion of Christ. In England they have a scheme of people's theatres and plays, in which the actors are selected by their resemblance to the part intended for them: a stout man for a fat man's part, a light-haired lady where that color is demanded, and so forth. This eliminates the use of wigs and make-up.

In this country the rise of the Chautauqua institution in the West developed all kinds of dramas and players. Amateurs became professionals. This winter they invaded New York and the regular stage in Stuart Walker's Portmanteau Theatre, as he called it, presenting odds and ends of drama, such as can never be seen on the professional stage, because there is little money to be made out of these. Perhaps there was not much dramatic value in these plays. They pleased rather by what they were not than by what they were.

Expert playgoers could not tell from one scene what was coming next. The scenery suggested more than it revealed. In a word it was amateur drama interpreted by professionals, and gave the same pleasure as a one-ring circus in the country gives to the jaded admirer of Barnum & Bailey's.

The amateur drama being the parent of the professional drama, acts towards its offspring as country grandmothers often do, taking the worn-out creature back to the simplicity of the farm, lecturing it on its origin, reminding it of the simplicity which should be the root of the healthy variety, and otherwise steadying its mind and its nerves. The Amateur Theatre is an old institution; the Parish Theatre is quite new.

CHAPTER II

ITS ADVENT IN AMERICA

Fifty years ago the Christian attitude towards the arts in general was one of suspicion among English-speaking peoples at least. Elsewhere it was none too cordial. Probably for the reason that the arts had been used so universally and powerfully, now by the Materialists, again by the Voltaireans, to belittle and defame Catholic truth and life. Even to this day is to be found amongst us the old Puritan dread of the press, of poetry, painting, sculpture, music, the novel and the play, lest through their seductive forms error and sin may work greater havoc. Evil of course uses them all, and in our time much better than virtue employs them.

The press of the world is virtually in the hands of secularism, which has not merely exploited itself, but practically destroyed the Christian press. The arts of poetry, painting and sculpture are in the same hands. The business of amusing the people, now become a vast commercial system with tremendous profits, recognizes no law but what it cannot dodge. The stage as an institution has many departments of which the drama is the most important and powerful. While the stage also belongs to the secular spirit, the

drama is under the domination of certain conventions which have saved it from a complete secularization; but Secularism is its master.

It is not difficult to explain why this condition exists, that all the good things in art, literature and journalism belong to Secularism and not Christianity. Modern Christians since 1650 acquired a bad habit of abandoning them whenever the secular spirit invaded them. American Protestants handed over the education of their children to the State, which would not admit religion into the schools, and now we have a population of 60,000,000 Americans without any religious belief at all. Christians would have nothing to do with the stage and the drama, and today stage and drama will have nothing to do with them.

Half a century back Christians in general would have nothing to do with the novel. It was immoral in their eyes. Too late they discovered that the novel was become an engine against the faith. Then in haste they called upon Newman and Kingsley and a hundred others to write Christian novels for them. Today you find the Christian novel everywhere popularly received. Did the Puritans, from this swift change of face, learn anything when the question of the drama came up? Not a thing. They avoided the drama, denounced it at times, preached against it, in a foolish way tried to kill it; and the drama has grown to gigantic proportions, invaded society in every part, multiplied itself through the cinematograph, become a tremendous force for good or evil; and now at the last moment,

yet not too late, the Puritans bob up with various schemes to uplift the stage and the drama.

As a matter of fact they have not done these things through conviction or graciousness, but simply because something had to be done. In other words, they were forced into it, and this forcing explains how the Parish Theatre came into existence. In 1850, let me repeat, the play, like the novel previously, was banned and damned; no Christian included the theatre in his amusements, except the sinners. Of course thousands of believers frequented the play, feeling that Puritan rigor was foolish, but at confession time they asked absolution for the sin: just as the novel readers asked absolution for the reading of novels. Theatre, actor, play and managers were a species of horror, or bogie, or evil spirit, whose existence poisoned the world.

There were excuses for this attitude, but no good reasons. The people of the stage were a wandering tribe, with or without religion, but their morality and respectability were certainly superior to army and navy standards, when the most pious found no stain in association with the country's defenders. Of course the attitude was impossible as well as foolish and was bound to fall before any well-directed attack. Amateur drama made the attack. It had been growing for a long time quietly. Many found it a pleasant dissipation to rehearse a play for the benefit of some charity. The amateur actor developed in due time the amateur stage, the amateur drama, its publisher, its manager,

and all the other necessities. At the present moment a score or more of publishers devote capital, energy, large catalogues, to exploiting the amateur drama, which really embraces everything that is done on the professional stage. It is truly a great institution, as well as a great business, but no one so far has regarded it as an institution.

It was impossible that Christians, and Catholics more particularly, should see this institution grow to power in full view, and not be forced to imitation. As nearly as I can follow its course, here is what happened, in sequence sometimes, oftener concurrently: the church school, convent, academy and college began to put on little plays for their own diversion; then more ambitious dramas, which often reached the stage of the big theatre, so eager were the people to witness them, as the people have always been. Presently there appeared upon the professional stage little groups of players with peculiar forms of entertainment. Sometimes they came with a minstrel show, which was judged moral by the local theologians, as not being a play. They had Irish names and did Irish dances, farces and monologues.

Again they came with a panorama of Ireland, a company of three or four, who set the stage for a moving panorama of the beloved island, and then performed their comedy, dancing, singing, and tricks before Irish scenes. McEvoy and his Hibernicon was one, Howarth and his Hibernicon was another, Erin and The Brennans was a third. It was surely no sin to

witness these instructive and amusing entertainments, even if one had to visit a theatre. Presently came Dion Boucicault and his famous *Colleen Bawn*, the play which made his name and fortune, and which gave the drama a new species of play still in vogue. The Irish wit and humor and personality invaded the professional stage and drew the Irish to the theatre.

Young Catholics became actors and returned in due time to describe their triumphs and to boast about their profits and to ridicule the common prejudice against the stage. People began to put two and two together, as the saying is. The great Passion Play at Ober-Ammergau helped the thinking. Very soon the parishes began to train amateur companies for social aim as well as for profit. There was some difficulty in the early days about keeping young Catholics socially intimate so as to hinder mixed marriages and other dangerous associations. The parish hall became a necessity, the parish stage became a delight, and the parish play drew thousands to its presentation.

I remember seeing *The Colleen Bawn* very well played by a parish company in 1876. It was considered a remarkable achievement. The audience had the double pleasure of enjoying the play and of watching their comrades act. It is forty years since that event. What has been the development in the meantime? We shall study that in another chapter. Suffice it to say that the parish section of the amateur drama is an established institution, and is really worthy to

be known by the name which I have given it, The Parish Theatre.

Every parish that can afford the luxury has a hall and a stage, the stage owns good scenery, fine lighting, and excellent properties, the plays presented are of the latest form and are well acted, and the audiences are always large and generous. It is no longer difficult for the amateur stage to put on *Hamlet*, nor for its musical department to stage light or comic operas. Gilbert and Sullivan were a benediction to the amateur stage. A most interesting volume could be written on the achievements of parish theatres in different parts of the country. A few are as well appointed as the professional stage.

Their revenue is a necessity to parish work, a fact which gives them a large economic value. Their influence in developing Catholic social spirit has always been very strong. Their educational value may also be of some importance, but that is a matter for discussion. Undoubtedly they have had a great deal to do with destroying the absurd prejudice against the stage and the drama, which a purblind puritanism has nourished for four centuries, and which dies harder than any other mortal thing. The main fact to keep in mind is that The Parish Theatre is now an institution, well established, well known, but as unconscious of itself as a boy of fifteen.

It has grown naturally and pleasantly, it has overcome all efforts to destroy it, and it is so intrenched that dynamite would not annihilate but simply scatter

it. The Puritans regard it with regretful eyes. It has forced them to examine the professional stage with a view to its moral direction. What cannot be annihilated must be regulated, directed, disinfected if need be, supported, praised judiciously, and occasionally disciplined. This is quite different from ignoring the inevitable, a favorite policy with the Puritans.

CHAPTER III

PRESENT CONDITIONS IN THE PARISH THEATRE

This brief account of the new institution, as a department of a world-wide movement called The Amateur Drama, or better, The People's Drama, leads to the question of the skeptical: Where is it to be found? and to the question of the more intelligent: How is this parish theatre carried on? Both the pious and the skeptical will resent the very name of the new institution, no less than the fact. What! that thing which we have denounced all our lives, and which has been denounced by churchmen since the days of St. Jerome, now an institution in the very bosom of the Church! The parish theatre forsooth! Display it to us, set it forth, drag it into the light, that all men may see! A play here and there at intervals is of no importance, but an institution! Shade of Bossuet!

The parish hall is well known in this country, as it was known for centuries throughout Europe and Asia. It is a necessary convenience for every society. I have estimated that three thousand parish halls exist in the United States. The figure is not absolute, but it is under the actual number. These parish halls are the home of the parish theatre. Most of them have a

stage, with scenery, lights, furniture; but it matters not how poor that stage may be, so inveterate is the love of the drama among the people, they will stage a play of some kind a few times a year. While doing parish work on Lake Champlain thirty years ago, the town hall was my home for the parish theatre. It had no stage, scenery, lights or curtain, so the players manufactured them of their own accord. In time they made it worth the while of the local magnates to build a proper stage with all the accessories. This improvement brought in the travelling professional companies, whose skilled performances roused the parish theatre actors to higher levels of effort.

The parish actors have developed the parish hall and their own successors, and have aided The Amateur Theatre in the development of their own drama. There must be thirty thousand parish theatre actors in this country, divided into three thousand companies. It is likely that they give ten or twelve thousand plays a year, and double that number of performances. Such an aggregation, even though working haphazard, without leaders, standards, ideals, or organization, must exert a tremendous influence in various directions. The skeptical will hardly sneer at such an institution. The intelligent will be interested at once in the conditions. They have only to watch the nearest parish hall to see the parish theatre in action; only to chat with the manager to learn the details, or with the pastor to get the history of the dramatic club. The pastor as a rule is the director, sometimes the

manager. He was born in the amateur drama, and turns to it for relaxation as well as for revenue. In college he was a manager and learned to love the drama as another man loves fishing. As the lone fisherman sits in lovely patience for the bite that comes not, the manager of a parish theatre endures the innumerable details of stage direction for the sake of the grand climax.

The priest-managers are more numerous than lay-managers, because only the larger parishes in cities can afford the expense of the latter. He is the very marrow of the institution. Without him, nothing. The uncertain quantity in The Parish Theatre is the actor. He is a very different character from his brother of the Amateur Theatre. He is more finicky, more sensitive, less enthusiastic, and therefore more difficult. Only the dominating clerical manager can hold him to his task. Three out of five amateur actors never learn a part before rehearsal, and never know a part until the last rehearsal. As children these same people knew every word before the first rehearsal, as adults they find it impossible to learn anything except under strong constraint.

The manager selects them, trains them, bears with them, encourages them, with a patience quite beyond the power of an average saint. Nevertheless the achievement of the parish theatre actors is remarkable. I have seen them play such dramas as *A Celebrated Case*, *Hazel Kirke* and *East Lynne* with genuine effect. At the present moment not a few parish

companies are giving remarkable performances of Passion plays in various parts of the country. Our unsettled American life, which leaves only the old in one place, and whirls the young from town to town, in search of work or excitement, renders the formation of dramatic companies difficult.

In spite of all difficulties the supply of actors never fails, and the interest of their audiences never diminishes. A psychological study of the parish theatre audiences would be worth while. They consist largely of people who rarely attend the regular playhouse, whose interest is childlike, who laugh at everything and applaud everything. The chief attraction for them is the actors. They want to see how Tom and Dick and Mary will acquit themselves as actors; and it must be a very cheap play and a poor performance which leaves them silent and unappreciative. The story told in the drama is more to them than the acting. To the expert it is a curious spectacle to see such an audience weep over a grief or a death which inclines them to laughter, because of its roughness. Simple people are thinking of the death and the grief rather than of the portrayal.

They laugh long at the farcical, for an opposite reason, that it is Tom who has fallen into the mud, Tom whom they know in daily life, and who fell into the mud so naturally. He must be a splendid actor. The notable fact about these parish audiences is that they support their theatre with endless enthusiasm. It is they who have built up the parish theatre, from

rather mixed motives of course. They desire to see their children and neighbors act, to do an interesting thing, to be entertained in a novel way, and to bring money into the parish treasury; the manager's aims are revenue, recreation and the bringing together of the people in a social way; the actors are pleasing themselves and helping the parish and achieving local fame. Thus was the parish theatre built up to its present proportions.

To get a proper drama has been the chief difficulty in its growth. Only since the demand for suitable plays has become keen has the difficulty been realized. The Amateur Drama has its publishers who provide plays suitable for the amateur stage, and The Parish Theatre has drawn upon that supply. It has sufficient variety, derived from a very simple method. Whatever themes are popular in the professional drama are adapted to the amateur stage. An examination of the catalogues of publishers, and there are not a few in the market, shows such divisions of the popular drama as military plays, farm plays, temperance plays, costume plays, mining plays, cowboy plays, Irish, German and Negro plays, naval plays, Indian plays, domestic plays, and high society plays. College plays with football as the theme have enjoyed popularity. For such companies as can afford to pay royalties the current drama is available. There has been no lack of material and variety, and the adaptation has been good; but monotony has been a very marked characteristic of the amateur drama, a monotony that

was not perceived until managers, actors and audiences had felt it a long time. It was a monotony of method, induced by the limitations of amateur actors and the amateur stage.

The amateur drama is based on the professional. The adapter remembers that he must provide a certain set of characters with so many lines each, for a limited stage, for limited scenery, and for ineffective lighting. Usually the play is in four acts, twelve characters, two interior and two exterior scenes, day and night, lines as terse as language permits, entrances and exits as simple as picking berries. The morality of the amateur drama is beyond reproach, it is much more moral than village or city life to the average child, wickedness is always hateful and always punished, and a sermon is usually delivered in each act. In other words, the amateur drama is a good sermon on obvious morality, it is a confection, and therefore becomes as monotonous as an oft-repeated sermon, or any other sweet.

There has arisen a cry for something different, with this result, that the Amateur Theatre has dipped into the trivialities of the professional stage for the sake of novelty. The Parish Theatre has not yet followed suit. It is, however, calling for something different, and must get it. Like the child it hardly knows what it wants. From many parts of the country the cry has come to me, in the shape of letters from pastor-managers, asking something new and suitable from my experience. This cry means a new period of

development. The Parish Theatre has without knowing it passed out of its childhood and can no longer find pleasure in the child's playthings.

The publishers of the plays for amateurs have long recognized the need, but have failed to supply it. Their catalogues are numerous and well gotten up, but their very number seems hurtful. They are made to suit all tastes, and therefore must be studied for days before a selection can be made. Then the manager must read ten plays to get one, perhaps he must read twenty. It has been so for thirty years. No one knows just what to do, or cares to do the right thing. Yet the way out is simple enough. We can discuss it in the next chapter, after this pleasant view of the parish manager, actor, drama, audience and stage. We have always known them, but never viewed them as an institution, working quietly and gaily in the shadow of the Church, towards the redemption of an art which commerce enslaves for the sake of profit, and the Puritan leaves in the gutter for the sake of righteousness!

CHAPTER IV

THE NEED OF ORGANIZATION

It seems clear enough that this institution, The Parish Theatre, exists, and with three thousand parish halls giving at least four plays a year it may be said to exist in a large way. It is a phenomenon. Its social and financial uses are well known to the clergy, who employ them for the benefit of the people and the parish finances. Approximately 60,000 persons are concerned in the production of parish drama; a quarter of a million dollars are spent annually on these plays, and the investment brings in nearly \$2,000,000. The clergy value highly the social influence of these affairs. Moreover, they are only a section of that great movement called The Amateur Theatre, or The People's Theatre, which has spread over the world. The universities, colleges, convents, academies and schools are also concerned, for they also have their own drama. With these facts before us it is not too much to say that The Parish Theatre is an institution, and worthy of study.

Some would have this study take a destructive form. That has been tried. There have been decrees uttered against drama in the parish and in the school, but the decrees are all dead, and the parish drama

lives and flourishes still. Decrees cannot kill such things. If they could, the pagan drama would have died long ago. Like dancing, and novel reading, and feasting, and other amusements of the people, the drama will never be abandoned because of decrees. The innocent indulgence in it must be guided, wisely developed, nobly restrained, by the elders of the nation. If you leave it alone, it flourishes rankly or foolishly; if you direct it, the good and the bad flourish side by side, but everyone will know the difference; which is about all that can be expected in a world like ours.

The Parish Theatre is not yet conscious of itself, its aims are few, and its methods spasmodic. Therefore its chief need is organization. While it is a section of The People's Theatre, it happens to have a higher destiny. It must not only be moral, but religious in the Catholic sense. Its social aim is proper and fine, its financial profit is useful, but in addition it must be above these, it must be artistic in a simple way. This Catholic artistic ideal can only be attained by study, intelligent study of the institution, its ways and means and methods. That means organization. The first step towards organization has been taken in this book by naming the new institution The Parish Theatre. The name will be instantly recognized by the thousands interested, and from this date will be heard all over the country, perhaps throughout the world. If you wish to feel its full significance, watch the Puritan wriggle and writhe at its first utterance,

as if a colic seized him. Fateful conjunction of the pious and the impious, the parish and the theatre!

The second step in organization should be central bureaus, located in New York and other central cities, to which the units may turn for light, direction, information, instruction, the newest methods and the best plays. The Catholic Actors Guild has opened such a bureau at its offices in the Longacre Building, Broadway and 42d Street, and will be ready for business by the time this book reaches the managers of the parish theatres. Its first business will be the distribution of this volume and catalogue, which comes out under its auspices. Its next business will be concerned with the production of plays suited to the new institution. This matter is the hinge of The Parish Theatre. As I have already pointed out, there are three classes of plays on hand: the amateur drama, the regular drama and the drama prepared for Catholic colleges and parish actors. The first is fairly acceptable, the second is good, but expensive because of royalties, and the third is heavy and commonplace.

Such a statement brings up the question: Well, what sort of a play does The Parish Theatre want, or need? To understand the answer one would have to be a manager at one time in a parish theatre. The plays provided for the amateur stage are good and useful, but they have become monotonous for a very simple reason: they reflect the regular stage. The dramatists look up the prevailing fashion in the regular drama, and then write plays for the amateurs in the

prevailing fashion. It is regular drama made easy. When you have produced ten, audiences know the formula the moment the curtain rises. This is fatal to interest. Many parish companies therefore seek the popular farce of last season when they are able to pay a high royalty. This system is of course fatal to The Parish Theatre, which then becomes an ordinary third-class theatre. It loses its character. The plays written specially for The Parish Theatre, or rather for its first cousins the college and convent stage, are stilted exercises in poetry or linguistics, prepared by professors of elocution or English, with little knowledge of drama and none at all of parish theatre audiences or human nature.

A compromise has been found by some managers and some playwrights by adapting plays from the regular stage to suit The People's Theatre. For example Mr. Charles Townsend has made a capital arrangement of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, which has all the color and snap of the big drama and goes well with audiences. Years ago I adapted the famous *East Lynne* by leaving out the third act, cutting the emotional speeches, and the superfluous characters, and made it a highly moral play besides, which it is not from The Parish Theatre point of view. As soon as an old favorite passes out of copyright this process can be employed with success; and it will be one item of work in the central office to adapt famous plays to the parish stage. But the proper idea will be to found a parish theatre drama and to get dramatists for that work. Now for an answer to the

question: What sort of a play does The Parish Theatre need? It needs a four-act play in simple language, easy to stage, rich in incidents and fun, with a good story, and employment for ten characters. There should be elevation in the theme, sweetness in the diction, and cleanliness in all the details. It should not require more than two hours to perform. This is simple enough, and the amateur drama is produced from a like simplicity, but amateur drama does not reach the real need of The Parish Theatre.

In various parts of this country The People's Theatre, sometimes called the Neighborhood Theatre, is producing a local drama which deals with the life the people lead. This drama takes up the ordinary problems of life and shows how they should be solved. The stage in this instance becomes the mirror of social life, and simple, irreflective people see their life as in a mirror, and are much pleased, deeply interested, and wisely instructed. The common crowd, it must be admitted, do not reflect much, and, when they do, reach regrettable conclusions only too often. They need steady instruction, advice and restraint from wise friends. The drama can be used to teach them. Now The Parish Theatre, from this point of view, has a splendid field to itself. From association with non-Catholics our simple people are filled with innocent heresies, not of doctrine, but of life. For example, too many of them cannot see the difference between the life of grace and the life of natural goodness: they see no danger in the intimacy of Catholic and pagan;

they do not understand why religion should be necessary to education, literature, journalism and art; they shrink at the reproach of poverty and ignorance, so freely hurled at the Christian body by the ignorant.

Therefore the drama suited to The Parish Theatre should deal with local and historical Christian life. The theme and the characters should be presented with all the humor inherent in both. The audiences of this theatre want in the first place a good story, with room for tears, laughter and thrills; then they want the colloquial, picturesque costuming, and effective tableaux; and in particular they desire plain language. The humor and the pathos can be broad and homely, but the language and the action must be speedy. This prescription is thoroughly modern. It is very different from that which pleased the common crowd in Shakespeare's time, or even a century back. Where are we to get such a drama? The writers of amateur drama will be able to provide it as soon as we show them a model parish theatre play on the boards. A Christian dramatist will follow the prescription with the right spirit, once he too has seen such a play in presentation. The question is: Will The Parish Theatre pay for it? Why not? A royalty of five dollars is within the power of any company, and all of them would be glad to pay it to be saved the trouble of reading catalogues and plays for weeks.

It is not intended that this prescription shall be too literally followed. The farce, the musical comedy, vaudeville, tragedy, all have their place in The Parish

Theatre. Each has its own parish theatre form. For example *Richelieu* can be beautifully arranged for amateurs, and even *Hamlet*. The comic operas of Gilbert and Sullivan deserve an everlasting place. Imitations of musical comedy have a right to presentation, so much do the people enjoy them. This variety is necessary to escape from the monotony above mentioned. The central bureau must settle all these matters, find the dramatists, and market the plays. The New York office will send out this coming season new plays written for The Parish Theatre to test the situation.

The fourth step towards organization should be the printing of a list of plays, and this has been done in the present volume, in a tentative way. The plays herein presented are the nearest approach to what The Parish Theatre needs, but they are all from the amateur catalogues and are by no means model plays. Most of them have been presented in one parish theatre or another, and have been approved by audiences. For the most part their language is commonplace, their incidents lurid, their characters good, and their morality sound; but they are often without taste or delicacy or loftiness of theme. There is no inspiration in them. Roughly put together, in imitation of the regular drama, their only merits are that they suit amateur actors, small theatres, and simple audiences.

The amateur actor is a difficult person. He cannot commit to memory long speeches, he can never arrive

in time for a swift tableau or a critical moment, and above all he can never play a pathetic part. People laugh at his pathos. These points explain the limitations of the amateur drama. Hence readers must not expect anything lofty from this catalogue. It is intended to shorten the labors of anxious and perspiring managers. Its five divisions embrace the average drama, farce, musical farce, plays for boys, plays for girls. It should keep any manager going for ten years, and by that time we shall have a supply of plays written for The Parish Theatre, in all keys, to suit all tastes and demands.

Budding playwrights may study this catalogue with profit. It shows what The Parish Theatre wants. I commend in particular *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, *The Octoroon*, and *A Rustic Romeo*, as models for future work. They are precisely what the amateur actor is able to do, and what the parish audience can understand, appreciate, weep and laugh over. Let them avoid the catalogues of plays for colleges and convents, where the audiences have a different standard and a higher taste. Their plays are not suited to The Parish Theatre audience, succeeding only in putting them to sleep.

The final step in organization should be a gathering of parish theatre managers in some quiet spot to discuss ways and means for improving the institution without awaking the Puritans, who are ready to call a plenary council to destroy this latest iniquity. For the present discussion will have to be by mail, or in

twos and threes, in gum shoes, without publicity. The Parish Theatre has grown to dimensions because no one noticed it. Now that it has a name, an office, a catalogue of plays, and a promising future with an income, let all beware! The great wire-puller known as The Whisperer, who stands in the shadow of thrones and whispers things to their occupants, may take notice and utter his sibilant condemnation.

CHAPTER V

THE PASSION PLAY IN AMERICA

A brilliant instance of the innate power of The Parish Theatre is the introduction of Passion plays within the last twenty years. I have not data sufficiently accurate to make positive assertions about this form of drama, whose first appearance seems to have been in the Jesuit college of Santa Clara, California, some twenty years ago. A Jesuit wrote the play, and the distinguished actor, James O'Neill, played the Christus. I have seen a photograph of him, so wonderful that one might have recommended it to the painters who so vainly seek models for their paintings of Christ. Few modern painters, if any, have been able to give us a convincing likeness of Christ; in this instance the actor seems to have achieved what the painters could not attain. The Santa Clara play won public applause and attention, and is still occasionally played in Jesuit institutions. It was produced last year in Boston, and I had the pleasure of reading the manuscript of the play. The present version, out of deference to public opinion in the East, has left out the part of the Christus. This omission would never suit the Italian peasant, who has been brought up on homely but effective parish Passion plays. The story is told

of one who attended an American Passion play, and who promptly after the first act left the theatre and demanded his money back on the ground that the play was fraudulent. "Where de Cristo?" he asked, and to the explanation he replied: "No Cristo, no good play." The criticism was valid. We are all afraid that the regular stage will attempt again a Passion play, as did Salmi Morse in 1890, or thereabouts, which progressed to the selection of a theatre and the rehearsal of the play, when public opinion wiped it out. If The Parish Theatre produces the Christ in person, why not permit the same privilege to the regular stage? Therefore writers of Passion plays have omitted the person of Christ. However, in the winter of 1917 a young priest in the diocese of Buffalo dramatized Father Klarman's novel, *The Princess of Gan Sar*, and introduced the Christ without offending pious eyes or ears. In fact a good impression was made, and the clergy who attended the first presentation were edified both by the play and by the effect upon the audience.

The second presentation of a Passion play occurred in the Redemptorist parish of Roxbury, Boston. The parish owns a fine parish theatre, whose stage is equal to all the demands of the modern play. About fifteen years ago Rev. Father Kenzel wrote a Passion play for the young women of the parish, entitled *The Mystic Rose, or Pilate's Daughter*. It was staged during the Lenten season, and so beautifully presented that the Boston world went out to see it, and has

done so every Lenten season since, with ceaseless delight. An enterprising manager undertook to interest the general public in it but failed. The play makes its sole appeal to the religious emotions, and is rather limited in characterization. It is therefore too simple for the ordinary playgoer. The Passionists of Hoboken probably were the next to present a Passion play, which by reason of the pains taken with it became the most notable of its class. As they were in possession of a fine auditorium, whose stage was spacious enough for modern Shakespearian drama, the promoters had only to provide the play, scenery and costumes. With the Santa Clara and Roxbury productions before them, it was not difficult to improve upon these predecessors. The result demonstrated what The Parish Theatre is able to do in dramatic production.

Veronica's Veil was the title of the play, and the author was Rev. Bernardine Busch, C.P. He adopted the use of alternate tableaux to carry on the action of the drama and to add to its splendor. The play opens with a tableau of the betrayal of Christ, in three actions: the kiss of Judas, the prostration of the soldiers, and the binding of Christ. Immediately the scene changes to the palace of Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin is discovered in consultation. Opinion is divided, Nicodemus stoutly though cautiously defending Christ, while Caiaphas bitterly demands capital punishment. The High Priest wins and Christ is condemned to death. Then appear Judas and Veronica, the traitor to fling back the blood money and the woman to plead

for the Nazarene; but neither the remorse of one nor the pleading of the other can change the determination of Caiaphas and his party. The act is written with considerable power, enough to demand professional actors for the work. It is written in fact for professionals, and is consequently beyond the powers of amateur actors, whose attempt to portray the rage of Caiaphas and the remorse of Judas lands them in rank melodrama.

The second act shows the home of Veronica, while the trial of Christ is going on among the rulers of the city. Sirach, the husband of Veronica and a member of the Sanhedrin, brings the news of the condemnation, the scourging and crowning with thorns, and the preparations for crucifixion. The procession to Calvary passes the door. Veronica rushes forth to meet the Saviour and presents Him with the towel which He presses to His bloody face; then the procession moves on and Veronica reenters bowed with grief and horror. As she holds up the towel those present kneel with awe before a portrait of the Saviour on the towel, from which shines a mysterious light. At the spectacle Sirach and a daughter of Caiaphas humbly confess their faith in Christ. The scene is rather naïve, and lacks any consideration for people experienced in modern drama. The face on the towel is the familiar face of the art stores, its eyes now closed, now open, and too precise, too accurate for a modern drama. It would suit a medieval miracle play admirably, but for a modern audience the portrait should be blurred, bloody, yet able to suggest the face of the agonizing Christ.

This act is followed by a tableau of the crucifixion in three scenes: the gambling soldiers, the three Marys at the cross, and the death of Christ.

The third act takes place in the house of Caiaphas, immediately after the burial of the Saviour. Fear has seized the household of the High Priest, due to the earthquake and darkness and ghostly visitations which accompanied and followed the death of the hated Nazarene. Then the leading characters enter one by one and fill Caiaphas with horror: the centurion who presided at the execution describes the death of the Master and announces his faith in the Son of God; next Ruth, the younger daughter of the household, makes a like declaration of faith. Thereupon a convulsion shakes the household of Caiaphas. Ruth is banished forever, her mother dies suddenly, and Caiaphas under the stress of trouble goes insane. For the third time the dramatist makes demands upon amateurs which would try the highest skill of a professional, with the usual result that some scenes approach the burlesque. The third tableau is that of the Resurrection.

The scene now shifts to Rome, where Ruth and Veronica are living, devoting their lives to the spread of the faith, and to the working of miracles by means of the wonderful veil. In the house of the noble Fabius there is great grief because his child Claudia is sick unto death, and their appeals to the gods and to the skill of the physicians have been in vain. Claudia dies. Then comes Veronica to the grief-stricken parents,

places the veil upon the dead body, and brings the girl back to life. Fabius and his family become Christians. In the catacombs they witness the ceremony of receiving the virgins into a religious life. This scene is invaded by Roman soldiers, guided thither by the vindictive sister of Ruth, Miriam, the elder daughter of Caiaphas, who has sworn everlasting enmity to the Christians. The fifth and last act is devoted to the trial and death of the martyrs. It is splendidly mounted to show the palace of the Cæsar and the Mamertine prison. In the latter the martyrs are seen preparing for death and glory, the miraculous veil restores sight to the jailer's wife, and both become members of the fold. In the former the noble Fabius and his family are brought before the Emperor for examination and for sentence; their son, Regulus, a favorite general, defends them and is slain on the spot; the miraculous veil is present and destroys a statue of Jupiter in the Emperor's presence; ordered by Cæsar to destroy the veil, Petronius, a soldier is killed; then the enraged Miriam repeats the attempt of the soldier and also perishes; but the prayers of Ruth change her heart and she dies in contrition. The last tableau shows the martyrs in glory.

The beauty of this play is remarkable. Its faults are common ones, looseness of structure, little regard for the unities, too great a demand upon the skill of amateurs, a lack of simplicity, too much wordiness. In the matter of staging it is too richly colored, giving an impression that the life of the Jews was a daily

pageant. Even the terrible Mamertine is made picturesque, and the catacombs. But as an example of what The Parish Theatre can do it is a marvel. As an illustration of what the people want at times it served perfectly: twenty performances were not enough to satisfy the popular demand. Two amateur companies were kept going, and as the actors worked daily for a living, the expert can see what the amateur actor is ready to do. Twice a week he returned from the day's work in office or factory or business and donned the elaborate costume of Jerusalem or Rome for the play. Father Hugh Benson, the distinguished English convert, wrote a Passion play called *The Upper Room*, which for five years has been presented during Lent in the Lourdes parish of New York. While *Veronica's Veil* was a gorgeous dramatic expression, *The Upper Room* has for its keynote restraint. A single scene, that small room in which the religion of Christ began its corporate existence, is the place. Here come all the characters connected with the tragedy of Calvary, with the latest details, or with their grief and despair. At each step in the agony of Christ, some character appears to tell what has happened. At times the window or opening at the back is thrown wide, and the spectator may see things that are going on outside. Thus the spears of soldiers are seen passing, the shouts of the mob are heard, the three crosses are dragged by and that of the Saviour's falls to the ground and then appears again. At the close of the play the perspective shows three

crosses on a far, storm-swept hill. It is not a drama of action but of suggestion. Its interest never fails. Its language is sweet, striking, the sentiment pitched in melancholy, but full of resignation and hope and triumph. The effect upon audiences is always profound.

Last year the city of Lawrence, Massachusetts, produced a Passion play. A distinguished member of the Augustinians, Father Palmieri, wrote it. It was translated into English and given its first presentation in the Italian parish. In construction it followed the method of *Veronica's Veil*, allowing the tableau to complete what the text could not; it made something of the Veil incident in the same way; Caiaphas faced Pilate, and Judas faced his devoted sister in the dramatic struggle; the Virgin Mother was introduced, rather ineffectively; and the close proved to be an anti-climax in power and in sympathy. It was received, however, with deep interest by large audiences through the State, paid expenses which were high, and fairly recompensed its promoters. Passion plays were presented in Brooklyn, in Union Hill, New Jersey, in Toronto, Canada, and in lesser places, mostly Italian parishes with whose people the Passion play is popular. It is easy to predict that this class of drama will speedily become common in this country.

Akin to this species of drama is the special play produced by private enterprise or local enthusiasm, such as The Mission Play of McGroarty in California and Shamus O'Brien in New York. The former is familiar to tourists who reach Los Angeles, because

it is played for their benefit at certain times, out at the beautiful old Mission San Gabriel, a few miles from the city. In a poetic and splendid fashion it tells the story of Fra Junipero Serra, the famous and wonderful missionary with whose deeds and character modern historians have fallen in love as others yielded to the fascination of the rediscovered Francis of Assisi. With Tyrone Power in the leading part the play proved most convincing, but when taken out among the Gentiles it could not find appreciative audiences. The Resurrection of Shamus O'Brien was an attempt to present the Sinn Fein rising in Dublin last year, and although written by an amateur in the style of melodrama and tableau, such fire glowed in its scenes as many a skilled production had not a spark of. It is not easy to say how many of these spontaneous productions take place each year, but these herein described are notable enough to test the mettle of The Parish Theatre, and to show the strength of that dramatic impulse in the human race, which *will* find expression in popular drama.

CHAPTER VI

A FORECAST

It may safely be said that the drama, whether as an amusement or as an institution, is irrepressible. Its many condemnations and repressions by all classes of authority, and its inevitable return to favor in the course of time, prove its inveteracy. As an amusement even the most puritanical can find no fault with it, except in its tendency to become a popular institution. Hence convents and colleges have found the play admirable, both for training in the vernacular and for recreation, a real remedy for the monotony of the cloister; monasteries have cultivated it as a recreation for mind and body. As an institution it has shown the usual tendency of human institutions to run to seed by seeking too much financial profit. It is always ready to pander to corrupt taste and appetite for the sake of gain, and comes regularly into collision with law, taste and morality. Nevertheless the institution persists. The axe and the fire cannot reach its roots.

It follows therefore that the repression of the righteous is hardly the practical method of dealing with the drama and the stage, neither being an intrinsic evil like sin. It is necessary, therefore, that the righteous should devise some other way than repression and

annihilation, and discuss practical solutions for present difficulties. Time has proven their attitude ridiculous. Their toleration of the parish, convent and college drama has provided them with one way out of a hopeless attitude, and the recent adoption of actors' societies by the hierarchy of England and Scotland, and a few of the American bishops, has provided another. Some pressing considerations here presented may induce the righteous to abandon for good the policy of repression and annihilation.

The invention of the motion-picture has made the drama universal and brought it into every home. Where formerly in the cities fifteen per cent of the urban population and eight per cent of the rural element frequented the theatre, now the whole world attends the motion-picture drama. In Chicago, for example, fifteen legitimate theatres house the ordinary drama, while four hundred theatres cater to the photo-play, in every corner of the western capital, attracting alike the children and the aged, the ignorant and the intelligent. The persistency of the drama has thus been multiplied by a million. This new invention means that the people will love the drama more than ever; some believe that it will replace the newspaper; some educators are preparing to teach the multitude that way.

There can be no doubt that the entire Christian world would turn out en masse to a photo-play course in Christian history and doctrine every winter, and get a better, richer, finer understanding of religion

than Sunday schools, average preaching and desultory home training can provide; chiefly because the photoplay is so brief, so vivid, and so interesting. Evidently such an invention is providential. In a time when telegraphy and photography and steam and electricity and commerce have brought the human race so closely together, when impressions are made so vividly by the press, and the millions live as much in one day as formerly in one year, methods more speedy and emphatic than the old ones must be employed in dealing with the more rapid human intellect of today. Capital has seen this through its love of profit, and has taken up the new inventions powerfully.

The business of entertaining the people has now become one of the most important, because so profitable, in the world. But the drama has become hopelessly commercialized, as the photo-drama will become in due time. There is no escape for the drama or the photo-drama from the grip of commercialism, which is of the brute order, without intelligence except for profit, sacrificing all things for cash. In the drama it excludes the Christian, the Catholic, the moral, the universal, the original, because as a rule these things do not make money. It includes the noxious, the bestial, the criminal and the vulgar, because too often they are profitable. The intellectual drama presented successfully by a commercialized stage earns money on some other plea than the intellectual.

It is this hopeless situation, recognized by all men, that points the way of The Parish Theatre. It will

be the refuge of the free drama; that is, a drama composed without thought of the cash profits, based on the life of man, natural and simple, void of the artificial and the stagey. It will provide a stage for the independent company. At present a few commercial nabobs own all the stages in the country, and permit no company to play there until their tax has been paid. No play goes on the boards without their permission. These hogs are like their animal compeers, they not only feed in the trough, but they live in it and sleep in it, lest a stray dollar should reach the outside. The Parish Theatre will naturally be the home of the Catholic drama which at present does not exist.

I am aware that quite a number do not desire such a drama, being content with *Richelieu*, *The Sign of the Cross*, *Quo Vadis*, and other examples of secular handicraft. But the very fact that you have a parish theatre postulates Catholic plays, Catholic playwrights, as it does Catholic actors and audiences. The great Catholic leaders of the past should not be enclosed in handsome tombs, or merely described in tomes of history; they should live again their noble lives and splendid deeds on their own people's stage. The joys, sorrows, tragedies, problems, humors, glories, of the passing day should not be allowed to pass without useful comment; they should repeat their wonderful lessons from the stage to the heart. There would hardly be a sound reason for the continuance of The Parish Theatre if it did not perform this happy service for the past and the present.

It is a sorrowful fact that the beautiful Catholic life on American soil for three centuries has only slight record in history, and none at all in the arts; no painters, poets, novelists, sculptors, essayists, musicians, record even a few fleeting glimpses of its achievement for the next generation. It must be the task of the drama and the photo-drama to revive the age of heroism, when the missionaries overran this continent side by side with the explorers and the traders; the age of struggle and suffering when the emigrants laid the foundations of our faith and our prosperity; the periods of war when our forefathers fought for their country, and lost not only life but even credit for their sacrifice, because the writing of American history is in the hands of the prejudiced.

I think it more than likely that The Parish Theatre will not only perform this necessary duty, but that it will develop in more surprising directions. It would be quite feasible, for example, to establish the stock company in it; that is, regular companies of players, who would keep right on for years producing plays, and could exchange theatres for the sake of increasing public interest. The stock company was the original fixed dramatic institution as opposed to the old-fashioned wandering players. It saved actors the worries of the wandering life and the insecure salary and the ever-threatening danger of having to walk back home. It vanished before the present system, which has unsettled the character of the actor more than any other influence in his present uncertain life.

It would be feasible also to develop a school of playwrights for The Parish Theatre, and give them a comfortable living. This would mean the right sort of plays, better plays, the founding of a drama reflecting the people's daily life of thought and action, and therefore better financial returns. A royalty of five dollars a performance would be no burden to any company, and would mean a respectable reward for the labors of the dramatist. That there is nothing far-fetched in this forecast may be seen in the fact that all these things are now taking place in a haphazard way: the formation of stock companies, the exchange of theatres, the writing of special plays and the collecting of royalties, the use of the parish theatre by travelling companies, and twenty other items for which there is no space here.

It may be hoped that this sketch of the new institution will not merely arouse interest in the intelligent, but will also soothe the ire of the righteous when they discover their ancient enemy full grown in the midst of the household. It is no one's fault. The great forces of society work right on in the face of theories and theorists unashamed. The Parish Theatre is as ancient as the Fathers who invented it, and as tough in fibre as those holy, versatile and invincible warriors of the primitive day. Writers of the present hour, who strive to wield the polished pen, who express their fiercest emotion in a polite sentence, who smile upon the bitterest enemy, because it is the fashion, long for the ferocious courage of temper and ink which

names men and deeds rightly, no matter what their draperies and their pretensions and their dignities. This repression may be wise and even proper, but it is weakening. The Fathers live like the oak: we conventionally polite creatures perish in our own politeness.

A LIST OF PLAYS

The plays in this list have one conspicuous merit: they fit the amateur stage, and for the time being The Parish Theatre. They were selected and listed to save the amateur managers hours of labor wading through the voluminous lists of the play publishers. The entire list can be read in one hour. The manager has but to determine what style of play he wants, and the catalogue will give it to him in half an hour. The ready reference list will even shorten the time. Remember that this catalogue is not intended for the use of colleges, convents, clubs, and city societies, but for The Parish Theatre, and its distinctive audience. The custom adopted by so many city clubs and societies, rehearsing metropolitan successes of last year, is not for The Parish Theatre, an institution too original to become an echo of the rather limited modern stage. It is true the listed plays imitate the dramatic themes and forms of the time, which cannot now be avoided; but the plays are morally sound, simple enough to hold simple audiences, and within the capacity of amateurs and their stage. The great variety of themes and methods will enable managers to use this list for the next ten years. There are six war plays, whose military uniforms and scenes always interest an audience; eleven Irish plays, whose humor and fun are

ever welcome; ten western plays, of the mines, the frontier, and the Indians, full of action, gun play, and fine scenery; thirteen rural plays of domestic charm; six historical plays in which costume and elocution are the prime requisites; eleven religious or moral plays, in which the spiritual note is dominant; eleven farces, polite or boisterous; twelve entertainments, useful to drill young actors; and a score of romantic plays, which are the delight of amateur actors and their audiences. They have all been tested by experience, and should be of great service in helping to mould the future of The Parish Theatre.

DRAMAS

Along the Missouri.

4 acts. 6 males. 3 females. 2 interiors. 1 exterior. Nearly three hours. An easy, pleasant play, with no difficulties in staging or costume, with a very good story. Fine old farmer, jolly chore boy, smooth villain, wronged woman and a pretty girl in the leads. Must be played with some polish and keenness in order to make every point tell. Price, 25 cents.

Andy Blake.

Irish comedy. 2 acts. 4 males. 3 females. An easy and pleasant play, runs about an hour and a half, may be lengthened by introducing songs and business for Andy, requires effective costuming and make-up for two character old men, and two

old ladies. Andy should be of first-class caliber as he carries the play. Price, 15 cents.

Bishop's Candlesticks, The

1-act drama. 3 males. 2 females. An effective play in costume. Runs about 45 minutes. Requires good actors and fine make-up. Suitable for a curtain-raiser, or for a club entertainment. Suited to display the talents of capable amateurs. Price, 25 cents.

Bill the Coachman.

Polite farce in 3 acts. 5 males. 4 females. Plays two hours. An unusually good drama for amateurs, full of action and wit. The characters include an old man, of strong character, an old woman, two lively young ladies, a dude with a lisp, a young coachman and a young gentleman. The scenery is easy. The costumes are modern and can be made as simple or as gorgeous as necessary. The acting must be good, swift, and therefore good actors and fine rehearsals are necessary. Price, 25 cents.

Burley's Ranch.

Western drama. 3 acts. 10 males. 4 females. A remarkably fine play, demanding experienced amateurs. One scene only. Characters include two Indian chiefs, three ranchmen, two military men, a reporter, a Chinese, a Mexican, an old lady, an Indian girl, and two young women. Having

but one scene it is easy to stage. However, all the effects depend upon the acting and the general stage business, upon the costuming and the lighting, and the innumerable details which make up a modern drama. Therefore it is to be played only by experienced companies. Plays three hours. Price, 25 cents.

Colleen Bawn, The

Irish drama. 3 acts. 9 males. 6 females. Plays three hours. It is written in many scenes, demands a great variety of costume, and has a cave scene, with a rescue of a drowning girl, which an ordinary stage could not handle. It has been played by amateur companies with great success, but they were companies with large experience. It should not be attempted by novices. It goes well with parish audiences, and when the cave scene can be well staged it is a tremendous success. Price, 25 cents.

Celebrated Case, A.

Costume drama in five acts. 7 males. 5 females. Plays three hours. This is also a play for experienced and seasoned amateurs. It is splendidly costumed after the fashions of Louis XIV. The first act is a prologue, and the second act is twenty years later, so that the make-up artist will be in demand to change faces accordingly. It is not difficult to stage, and has been played by amateurs all over the country. It is highly sensational and

emotional, and will give actors all that they can do. Price, 25 cents.

Corner Store, The.

4 acts. 6 males. 3 females. 2 interiors. Plays over two hours. With such characters as a wild orphan asylum girl, a Dutch policeman, an Irish mail-carrier, a colored loafer of a genial nature, Uncle Eli, the keeper of the little store, his good son and beautiful ward and loving wife, he would be a poor dramatist who failed to make a good play. This one is rollicking, yet tender, and the scenes in and about the store are dramatic and funny together. It goes very well with an audience. Price, 25 cents.

Country Kid, A.

Rural comedy. 3 acts. 6 males. 3 females. Plays two hours. This is the usual country drama with sensations in plenty. Easy to costume, to stage, and to rehearse, it will suit beginners and also appeal to the more experienced. The characters include the old farmer, the country boob, the tough, the tramp, the soubrette, the old woman, the villain, and the juvenile leads. Price, 25 cents.

Deacon, The.

Rural play. 5 acts. 8 males. 6 females. 3 exterior. 2 interior. Plays nearly three hours. The light-hearted Deacon carries the play with his

wit, humor and shrewdness. The drama is built on ancient but effective lines, and makes a good test in melodrama for any amateur company. The ladies in particular get a fine opportunity. The play is full of bits for all characters, and so demands much rehearsing. It makes good entertainment, and is the kind of a play to run for five nights and a matinee. Price, 25 cents.

Down the Black Cañon.

Mining drama. 4 acts. 11 males. 3 females. Plays two hours. Any number of supers. 3 outdoor scenes, one plain interior. The characters include mine owners, poets, vigilantes, miners, and a dumb boy. The incidents are highly melodramatic. A play for experienced amateurs, and able to play for a week to the average audience. Full of color and energy, but must be rehearsed with care and finish. Price, 25 cents.

Dust of the Earth, The.

4 acts. 6 males. 4 females. 2 interiors. 1 exterior. Plays over two hours. This is a story of Cinderella at Maple Farm, and how vainly her Uncle David sought to shield her from the steady but secret persecution of his wife and daughter. The humor of the piece is provided by the village gossip and the farm boy, and an air of mystery and promise is given to it by the irregular appearance of Wandering Tom and his devoted colored servant. The play may be classed high for its display of

all the necessary qualities of a parish drama.
Price, 25 cents.

Enlisted for the War.

3 acts. 7 males. 3 females. 3 interiors. Three hours nearly. Easy to produce. Costumes local and military. A love story, with just enough of war in it to be interesting. A model play for The Parish Theatre, because it will interest the actors, give them much to do without overtasking them, and please the average parish audience. Price, 15 cents.

Everyman.

Morality play. 1 act. 1 scene. 18 characters. Plays one hour and a half. The best sermon on death that ever was preached. As produced by Ben Greet, with all the usual business, it is able to interest any audience, cultured or common. While having only one stage setting, this setting must be carefully prepared. It can be done from the ordinary materials. The acting is simple, but must be clear and effective. The costumes are English of the sixteenth century. The play is a noble medium to train a company, to elevate taste in the drama, and to illustrate what the drama is able to do in skilful hands. Price, 50 cents.

Everyyouth.

Morality play of the same type. 3 scenes. 7 males. 6 females. Plays one hour and a half. Modern

costumes. Very easy to stage, having only the one set for the three scenes. Requires characters who can look the parts as well as act them. Has all the effectiveness of *Everyman* but lacks its nobility of scene and expression. Fine vehicle for a company that likes training, and a good lesson for all. Price, 25 cents.

Everysoul.

Morality play describing man's journey towards happiness. 1 scene. 17 characters. More elaborate than the preceding, full of choruses and dancing scenes, and demanding the same care in the staging and rehearsal. Price, 50 cents.

Experience.

Morality play describing the price which man pays for experience. 6 scenes. Any number of characters, which must be well played. Costuming modern but elegant. Can be played only by expert companies. Most effective with any sort of audience. Great moral lesson without offensive scenes. Royalty play. Price, \$1.

End of the Rainbow, At the.

College comedy. 3 acts. 6 males. 14 females. Plays over two hours. Originally written for a girls' institution, which explains the number of female characters. A lively modern school comedy, which any audience can enjoy. Easy to stage, and easy to act, since the actors have only to be

themselves. The interior scenes are highly ornamented. The costumes can be as elaborate as desired. Always successful play. Price, 25 cents.

Erin Go Bragh.

Irish drama. 3 acts. 5 males. 4 females. Plays two hours. Old-fashioned play, but full of incident, with good characters, and will make a full evening's entertainment. Especially suited to beginners. Price, 25 cents.

Fabiola.

Christian drama of the martyrs. 5 acts. 12 scenes. 8 males. 6 females. Plays two hours. Roman costumes of the third century. More of a curiosity than a play. Adapted from Wiseman's story of the same name, and a play by Canon Oakley. Must be costumed with care, and played with delicacy. Within the compass of fairly experienced amateurs, and has a great effect upon parish audiences. Price, 25 cents.

Farm Folks.

4 acts. 4 males. 7 females. 2 interiors. 1 exterior. Plays over two hours. One of the very few dramas which can be recommended heartily to The Parish Theatre. It is commonly known as an "atmosphere" play. While very simple in character and incident, it is charged with feeling and sentiment; the story is highly dramatic, and the details of scenery, stage setting, lights, costume

and make-up must be looked after with great care. When that is done the audience becomes entranced by a picture of simple life which leaves a perfume in the memory. Price, 25 cents.

Frozen Trail, The.

Alaskan drama. 4 acts. 8 males. 3 females. Plays two hours and a half. First two acts interior and picturesque scenes of an Alaskan winter. The other acts summer scenes on the Hudson. A very striking drama with an interesting plot, varied characters, and exciting incidents. Must be played by experienced actors, and the stage manager must exert himself to make the first two scenes thoroughly Alaskan and wintry. Price, 25 cents.

Four-Leaved Shamrock, The.

Irish modern comedy. 3 acts. 3 males. 4 females. Plays nearly two hours. Entirely modern in form; introduces an American woman journalist, and avoids all the familiar scenes and methods of the typical Irish play. It is a quiet drama, but with an ending so unexpected and startling as to rouse intense interest. Price, 15 cents.

Heart of a Shamrock, The.

Irish-American drama. 3 acts. 4 males. 4 females. Plays two hours. Entirely out of the old rut, and very modern. One scene for the three acts. Leading character a priest, living with his brothers in

a wild western district. The younger brother goes off the track, and is threatened with prison and lynching. The scenes are very quiet but very intense, and require first-class acting. The play is so different from the average Irish play that it may be classed as a novelty. Ordinary actors can play it, but its success in crude hands would be doubtful. Price, 25 cents.

Hazel Kirke.

Domestic drama. 4 acts. 9 males. 4 females. Plays nearly three hours. A famous play still produced by stock companies. It ran for a year in New York. Only the best and most experienced amateurs should attempt it. The scenery is simple, but rich, and the costuming has to be effective and often elegant in modern fashion. Dunstan Kirke, the old miller, is the leading character, and must be finely played. Pittacus Green, the comedian part, demands the highest talent. Demands as great rehearsing, and should be played for a week. Royalty play. Price, 50 cents.

Home Ties.

4 acts. 4 males. 5 females. 1 interior. Plays over two hours. A very easy play to stage because it has only one scene. All the characters are decent people. Two young women, two character old women, colored girl of the Topsy order, two fine young men, one dignified old man, one eccentric old man. The story is sweet and stimulating,

and the play depends entirely upon producing the thing called atmosphere. This means a pretty and accurate scene, careful make-up and costume, and a skilful display of quiet but keen emotion. Price, 25 cents.

In Plum Valley.

4 acts. 6 males. 4 females. 2 exterior. 1 interior. Plays two hours. This rural play is a case of letting the weasel among the chickens. A clever criminal drops into a peaceful farming community, and proceeds to rob them and deceive them in every way. It is doubtful if country people are so easily fooled and fleeced. However, the criminal gives opportunity to Uncle Jared and his people to display their shrewd, humorous, lovable natures, and the play will be found interesting to actors and audiences. Price, 25 cents.

In the Shadow of the Rockies.

Wild West drama. 3 acts. 8 males. 3 females. Plays two hours. A lively and simple drama of a mining town. Easily staged. Suitable to inexperienced players, who can make a good deal out of it. Price, 25 cents.

Just Plain Folks.

3 acts. 6 males. 4 females. One set of scenery. Two and a half hours. A charming drama of simple life in New England, in which atmosphere and character are the dominant factors. The

old Doctor, his sweet wife, the circus girl waif, the stolid and faithful servant girl, the rough circus man, and the country boy who falls from grace are beautifully drawn. While any ordinary well trained company can play it, the stage management will have to be of the best in order to secure the necessary color. Price, 25 cents.

Kathleen Mavourneen.

Irish drama. 4 acts. 11 males. 4 females. Plays two hours. This is an old favorite. The scenery is simple but picturesque. The costumes as usual. Kathleen has two suitors, a rich man and a poor man. She dreams that she marries the rich man, and passes through many trials that end in attempted murder; but just as murder reaches her, she awakes with a much changed mind, marries the right man, and all is well. A charming play of romantic interest, easily produced, but requiring good rehearsing and fine stage management. Price, 15 cents.

Little Lord Fauntleroy.

3 acts. 8 males. 3 females. Plays two and a half hours. While easy to produce each actor has much to memorize, and the parts mostly require so much distinction of dress and manner, that it is a play for the experienced only. The leading character is a boy of twelve and is usually played by a girl, as few boys can act naturally in such a part. The story, however, is so sweet and strong

that it carries even poor amateurs through successfully. Royalty play. Price, 25 cents.

The Little Princess.

3 acts. 6 males. 15 females. 3 interiors. Two and a half hours. A play of the same character as the previous, but more easily acted, if a little girl of twelve can be found to act the leading part. The story is so strong and sweet, and the characters so varied, that a parish audience is easily carried away by it. It requires long and patient rehearsing, and the best stage management. It has not been as popular as its predecessor, but deserves to be. Royalty play. Price, 25 cents.

Lone Tree Mine.

5 acts. 10 males. 4 females. 3 exteriors. 1 interior. Nearly three hours. A lively and pathetic melodrama. Scenes laid among the mines of Colorado. Easily played, but demanding great variety of acting and good rehearsing. Sure to delight a parish audience. Old man lead, strong villain, humorous Irishman, eccentric Chinaman, characteristic miners, lively soubrette, and pathetic women. The story is highly romantic. Price, 25 cents.

Liberty Corners.

4 acts. 12 males. 5 females. 2 interiors. 1 exterior. Plays nearly three hours. A humorous rural drama of a high standard. The language very good. Easily staged. The business is so

varied as to demand good actors and long rehearsing. Young man and gay soubrette in the lead. Odd country characters in abundance, requiring extra good make-up. Will bring out the entire strength of a first-class amateur company. Sure to delight a parish audience. Price, 25 cents.

Mountain Waif, The.

4 acts. 9 males. 3 females. 2 interiors. 1 exterior. Plays nearly three hours. This is old-fashioned melodrama of the mining camp, with plenty of incident, striking scenes, red-handed villains, rough boys, and vivacious women. It becomes burlesque easily, unless care is taken to dress each part well, to have good wigs and fine make-up, and to rehearse carefully. When well done it is a fine presentation of frontier life and pleases parish audiences. Price, 25 cents.

Mary, Queen of Scots.

2 acts. 7 males. 7 females. Old-fashioned romantic costume drama, concerned with the escape of Queen Mary from Loch Leven castle. Over two hours. Language stilted but fine. Incidents beautiful and exciting. The six scenes demand much shifting of scenery, and both scenery and costumes must be good. However, the play is easy to manage. Useful for parish companies to test their training, and very popular with audiences because of Mary Stuart. Price, 15 cents.

Man from Maine, The.

5 acts. 9 males. 3 females. 4 sets of scenery. Nearly two hours. This belongs to the criminal drama. It is a swift, thrilling melodrama, with a cool gambler, a dashing adventuress, a few toughs, an upright fool, and the usual lovers, all gracefully directed to their proper finish by the level-headed man from Maine. Such a play goes well with audiences for a change. It is also a good test of a company, and will excite their interest. Demands quick action and first-class ensemble playing. Price, 25 cents.

Miss Mosher of Colorado.

4 acts. 5 males. 3 females. Two hours. 2 exteriors and 1 interior. Easily staged. This is a sentimental drama, very sugary, with a good comedy element in two old men and a butler. The scenes are handsome and romantic. The invasion of Lenox society by a hustling Westerner booming his real estate is the theme, and it is used to contrast the simple life and ideas with the complex life of society and the absence of ideas. Must be played by intelligent and experienced actors to get across. Price, 25 cents.

New Partner, The.

3 acts. 8 males. 4 females. 2 interiors. Plays nearly three hours. A modern class drama of the first rank. Gives a glimpse of the labor and capital struggle in a pleasant way. Very intense

and yet natural, easy to costume and stage, but must be dressed to the limit of elegance. Therefore not to be played by a second-rate or inexperienced company. Full of humor and every part worth while. Royalty play. Price, 25 cents.

Noble Outcast, A.

4 acts. 4 males. 3 females. 2 interiors. 1 exterior. Plays over two hours. A society melodrama of the quiet kind. The lost daughter is claimed at the critical moment by her father, who is unaware that he is really her father. The thing could hardly happen in real life, but the author has made it plausible, and the story will tell with the parish audience. It is easy to stage, full of sobs and villainy, with a humorous light furnished by the tramp father, and a most happy ending. Price, 25 cents.

Oak Farm.

3 acts. 7 males. 3 females. One set of scenery interior. Plays over two hours. This is one of the ideal plays for The Parish Theatre. The genial old farmer, his clever son, the charming members of the family, the funny and vicious neighbors, the cozy home, the sweetness of the domestic virtues, are all set forth in the simplest fashion, yet with intense feeling. It is a play of atmosphere, which means that the stage must be well set for the single scene, the make-up be perfect, and the lighting first-class. The Christmas scene is simply

delightful, and the parish company which can produce this play to perfection will deserve the medal of excellence. Price, 25 cents.

The Octoroon.

5 acts. 14 males. 6 females. 1 interior. 2 exterior scenes. Over two hours. This famous drama once required an immense stage for production. It can now be played on a small parish stage. Written with many scenes, it can be arranged for one scene to an act. Most of the characters appear only once. It is a wonderful drawing card for parish audiences, and rouses the acting spirit in parish actors. The auction of the slaves requires good stage management, and the burning of the dock and the steamer requires careful treatment, but they are not beyond the power of the average company. Plays of this sort should be played at stated times to keep up the interest of actors and audiences. Price, 25 cents.

On the King's Threshold.

1 act. 12 males. 4 females. 1 scene. Poetic drama lasting one hour and a half or more. Seanchan, the Irish poet, has been insulted by the King, Guaire, and determines to die of starvation on the steps of the palace, a method of calling the attention of the people to the dishonor done poetry by the king, and of punishing the insulter. In turn the pupils of the poet, his townsmen, the church, the state, the army, the courtiers,

and the royal family appear before the starving poet, beseeching him to accept the situation and live. At last comes his heart's darling. The poet rejects them all. Then King Guaire puts a halter on the neck of every pupil and threatens them with death if their master yields not. A most striking and simple costume drama of the Irish legendary time. Found in Yeats's works. Price, one dollar.

Prisoner of Andersonville.

Military comedy. 4 acts. 10 males. 4 females. 3 exteriors. 1 interior. Plays over two hours. This is a high class play, because the people are of a refined and well-bred kind; therefore it demands skill and experience from amateurs. It treats of southern life, in a plantation home and in the camp, and provides plenty of good character work. The comedy is of more importance than the military. It would not suit actors wishing to present a lively and high-colored war drama, in which military uproar and red fire are needed. Its military sentiment is intense, uniforms are numerous, and no offence will be given to either North or South. Price, 25 cents.

Pottersville Post Office, At the.

Rural play. 3 acts. 9 males. 8 females. 1 interior. Plays two hours. The play is of the farce-comedy order. It is easy to stage, because of its one scene, the country post office. It requires

minute care in costume and make-up, because eight of the characters are amusing and peculiar people. Rehearsals will have to be numerous. When well done it is a side-splitting affair, and will win any parish audience. The village expressman, the postmaster, the spiritualist lecturer, the constable, the tightfisted deacon, the escaped lunatic, in contrast with the summer boarders from the city form a splendid balance. Price, 25 cents.

Rip Van Winkle.

Romantic drama. 2 acts. 8 males. 3 females. Many scenes. Plays two hours. The version of this story played by Joe Jefferson is a royalty play, and more effective for presentation. The present version is old-fashioned drama, in many scenes; but it can be easily arranged in a three-act form, and will go very smoothly. It is a costume play of the Dutch period in New York. Rip Van Winkle is the chief character and his transformation from a young man to the whiskered sleeper of the Catskill Mountains demands a good actor. It wins the parish audience promptly by its humor and its weirdness. Price, 15 cents.

Richelieu.

Romantic drama. 5 acts. 10 males. 2 females. 4 interiors. 1 exterior. Plays nearly three hours. This famous play is of course too difficult for the average company, but it should be attempted

occasionally by experienced and capable players. It is a great tribute to the Church no less than to the clever Cardinal who made France. There are two arrangements of the drama, one for colleges, characters all males, and one for The Parish Theatre, the present. This has been simplified in scenes and dialogue, to suit amateurs. The costuming must be fine, and the leading actor a good declaimer. Price, 50 cents.

Roses of St. Dorothy, The.

Religious play. 6 acts. 4 males. 5 females. 2 interiors. 1 exterior. Play about one and a half hours. The acts are short, and deal with the martyrdom of St. Dorothy in a simple and poetic way. Careful costuming and clear, beautiful utterance of the lines will be the needs of this drama, along with good lighting of the stage. The legend of the drama is concerned with the story of the roses which St. Dorothy sent by the hands of an angel to the young skeptic who smiled at her belief in a celestial world. Plays of this kind must be presented with great care, if they are to have proper expression and effect. Price, 50 cents.

Robert Emmet.

Romantic Irish drama. 3 acts. 10 males. 2 females. 2 interiors. 2 exteriors. Plays two hours. This historical play has been a favorite with amateurs for forty years, and deserves a permanent place in The Parish Theatre. The new version by

Mr. Charles Townsend is much easier to stage than the old one. Being a costume play, care must be used in that matter. Being a tragedy, too, the atmosphere must be in tune with it, and considerable discretion should be exercised in selecting the actors, so that physically they may fit the parts. Price, 15 cents.

Stubborn Motor Car, The.

Western drama. 3 acts. 7 males. 4 females. 1 interior. Plays over two hours. The name suggests a motor car play, but it isn't. The car breaks down near the ranch of Jim Page, and brings on the incidents of the drama. The cowboy hero, the pompous Englishman, the Apache girl, the German chauffeur, the Chinaman, the business man, the outlaw, and the girls, form a cast which interests both actors and audiences. The plot is simple but effective. The interest is intense, the comic situations are good, and the acting required is of the natural kind. This demands the best kind of rehearsing. Price, 25 cents.

Shaun Aroon.

Modern Irish drama. 3 acts. 7 males. 3 females. 3 interiors. Plays two hours. This play portrays simple Irish life of today, without allusion to political troubles. It is built up on the old lines, but brought into line with modern taste. It lacks the emphatic Irish feeling, and gets colorless here and there, but a good company will correct these

deficiencies and make it successful. Requires care in make-up and costuming. Price, 25 cents.

Time of His Life, The.

A farce. 3 acts. 6 males. 3 females. 1 interior. Plays two hours. One of the funniest farces ever written. With one exception the characters are all ordinary people. This exception is a remarkable imaginary invalid. The fun starts from Tom's prank of serving as butler at his sister's table, in the guise of the regular butler, old colored Uncle Tom, who happens to be absent for the evening. As Tom's girl, and the girl's father, and Tom's brother-in-law drop in that evening, the situation becomes critical for the trickster. The scenes are side-splitting. Characters and scenes are so simple and natural, that very good rehearsal will be required. Price, 25 cents.

Tompkins' Hired Man.

Rural drama. 3 acts. 4 males. 4 females. 1 interior. Plays two hours. While easy to stage with its single scene, this play requires a minute stage-setting. It is a good sample of the play having atmosphere. The kitchen of a farmhouse does not suggest the dramatic, but this play is full of drama and sentiment too. It has to be played as simply as real life, and yet its tremendous effects must be brought out. Two middle-aged men and the wife of one are the chief actors. The wife has palmed off a strange child on her husband as their own,

and later bears him a child who must take second place in his affections and in the inheritance. Who was this child? How is the situation to be solved? The play answers these questions finely. Price, 25 cents.

Uncle Rube.

Rural play. 4 acts. 8 males. 3 females. 2 interiors. Plays over two hours. One of the best of its kind. Uncle Rube is a fine type, and will satisfy any actor. Three elements compose this play: the rural, the melodramatic, and the sentimental. Therefore it provides opportunities for the comedian, for the heavy character, and for the sweetness which goes with domestic life. To keep the three harmonious, good stage management will be needed. The characters are a breezy western girl, an amusing soubrette, a lively matron, a dyspeptic skinflint, his thievish son, a courageous dude, a highbred hero, three ordinary men, and Uncle Rube. The climaxes are powerful. Price, 25 cents.

Up Vermont Way.

Rural play. 4 acts. 8 males. 4 females. Many scenes. Plays three hours. This is a very strong, very long and very powerful play for amateurs, and should be undertaken only by an experienced company. The author has adopted the old fashion of many scenes to an act. The stage hands will have much work to do. However, it is a play

that pleases the people generally, by its great variety of character, and will increase the reputation of a good company. Price, 25 cents.

Uncle Tom's Cabin.

Southern play. 5 acts. 7 males. 5 females. 4 interiors. Plays over two hours. This is a new version of the famous old play, and can be easily played by amateurs. The main parts of Uncle Tom, little Eva, St. Clair, Aunt Ophelia, Topsy and Legree, are retained, and are set forth very effectively. The story of Uncle Tom and little Eva has a great effect upon audiences. Besides, the reputation once enjoyed by the play makes people curious to see it once. It is therefore a good drawing-card for amateur companies, and can be followed up with the original version. This makes more of Lawyer Marks and Gumption Cute, and of colored characters, and displays the trip across the icy river by Eliza. Price, 15 cents.

Wahnaton.

Frontier drama. 4 acts. 9 males. 4 females. 3 exteriors. 1 interior. Plays over two hours. This play is a modern version of the ancient Nick of the Woods, although this fact is not mentioned. It is the most thrilling frontier play on record. The leading man plays three parts, all separate, and unsuspected till the end. The siege of the block house and stockade is capital. The characters are all high-colored, either very good or very

vicious. The scenery required is most romantic. Only a first-class company should attempt it with a first-class stage director, and all the resources of both should be devoted to presenting it well. In populous towns it should play for several nights. Price, 25 cents.

Wolsey.

Romantic drama. 3 acts. 10 males. 2 females. Many scenes. Plays two hours. A costume drama valuable chiefly for its story, its closing scene, and its leading character. It offers good material for interested actors, and for pleasing an audience. The famous Cardinal Wolsey, travelling in disguise through England, becomes the witness of a crime. The heroine is accused of this crime, is tried, and is about to be condemned to death, when the great Cardinal appears in full regalia and bears witness in her behalf. The effect upon audiences is impressive. Such a play has a good effect upon the morale of parish actors. Plays of this sort should be produced occasionally. Price, 15 cents.

Village Lawyer, The.

Comedy drama. 4 acts. 6 males. 5 females. 2 interiors. Plays nearly three hours. A political struggle is the main theme of the play, in which the hero has to fight the questionable methods of his future father-in-law. While too long drawn out, the play is full of swing and will give a first-

class company fine opportunity, in modern style.
Price, 25 cents.

Whiskers.

Polite farce. 1 act. 3 males. 7 females. 1 interior. Plays one hour. This amusing play will suit almost any company, new or old. It tells the story of an unfortunate bridegroom who is held up on his wedding morning by a series of grotesque accidents. All ends happily, but not until he has suffered and the audience has laughed for an hour. The dresses of bride and bridesmaids offer the ladies the usual opportunity for producing an impression. Price, 15 cents.

PLAYS FOR MALE CHARACTERS

Christopher Columbus.

4 acts. 12 characters. Costume play. Three acts have scenes in and around the Spanish court, the fourth is the deck of a ship. The theme is the effort of Columbus to get a hearing at court, his success, the mutiny at sea, and the discovery of land. It is sensibly written, serious, with no humor, but with such vigor as to carry the story well. Plays one and a half hours. Price, 25 cents.

Falsely Accused.

4 acts and 23 scenes. English setting. Old-fashioned play, modern costume, easy to put on, full of spirit and incident, but requires a stage where

the scene-shifting is easy, or the play would go on for hours. Its great advantage is that with a court scene and any number of supernumeraries, it gives everybody a chance to appear, and serves well for training a crowd of beginners. If your stage has little scenery, or difficulty in making shifts quickly, avoid it. Plays two hours. 25 cents.

Vacation.

Drama. 2 acts. 11 males. 1 exterior. Plays one hour and a half. This play tells the story of a young man falsely accused of stealing. All the characters in the plot meet at a camp in the Maine woods, where the innocent man earns his living as a guide. By degrees his innocence is established, the real culprit is caught, and happiness abounds. Specialties can be introduced ad libitum and the play made into vivacious entertainment. Price, 25 cents.

Hermigild.

5 acts. 13 scenes. 16 characters. This is a tragedy in gorgeous costume, and will task an experienced company to learn the lines and to portray the characters. College boys do it very well, because they have good memories and love scenes of strife and eloquence. The stage must be large and full of scenery, easily shifted. The mob scenes demand many supernumeraries. Weapons also are in demand, and riots and single encounters occur, with thunder and lightning in plenty. Likely to

delight a whole parish. Plays three hours. 25 cents.

Making of Larry, The.

Boy Scout play. 2 scenes. 10 characters. Any number of scouts besides. The first scene is a playground, the second a camp. It is easy to stage and to costume. It can be lengthened by the introduction of drills and songs and boy nonsense to fill a whole evening. It is more of an entertainment than a play, but there is a plot in it, some development of character, a trifle patronizing to the Irish, but not offensive. 25 cents.

The Proscribed Heir.

3 acts. 9 characters. Costume play of the same character as the above, plenty of declamation, easy scenery, the exterior and interior of a village inn, a good story well carried out, and plenty of emotion. Like all this class of plays there is more talk than action, but enough action. The costumes give it a striking effect, and parochial audiences love to see the young people in costume. Easy to stage. Plays one and a half hours. 25 cents.

Riding the Goat.

10 to 20 characters. A burlesque on the initiation ceremonies of secret societies, and apart from the text, which is very amusing, admits of the introduction of specialties, and any number of characters. It is useful in helping to develop talent in a

society or new dramatic company, and pleases an audience immensely. It must be lengthened by specialties to make it a full evening's entertainment. 25 cents.

Calvary.

A Passion play. 7 acts. 28 characters. This play is not as difficult as the number of acts and characters would indicate. It was played by the parishioners of the Redemptorist parish in Boston. The scenes are a desert, a lake shore, a street in Jerusalem, the Garden of Gethsemane, the hall of the Sanhedrin, Mount Olivet, Pilate's court, a road, and the hill of Calvary. The only difficulty is the number of fine costumes required for the eminent characters, and also for the soldiers. Where played by a capable and experienced company the parts can be doubled, and it thus becomes an average play, quite easy to produce. But it must have a good stage to produce the effects and the tableaux. Plays three hours. 25 cents.

Prophecy, The.

4 acts. 17 characters. Costume play of the time of Henry VIII. It is of the same character as the other costume plays in the list, full of elocution, also of action, the scenery easy, the incidents striking and dramatic, with little trouble for the stage manager. Plays two hours. 25 cents.

Up Caesar's Creek.

3 acts. 11 characters. A regular boy's play, with the first scene a club room, the second a camp, and the third, a minstrel show in camp. It is easy to stage, can carry any number of characters and specialties, and may run from one to three hours at pleasure. A good stage manager can do almost anything with it. 25 cents.

Under the Flag.

5 acts. 13 characters. A model play for young men and for The Parish Theatre. The scenery is easy, the costumes are modern but picturesque, the incidents are such as thrill an amateur company and hold the breathless interest of a parish audience. There are prison scenes, execution scenes, single combats, soldiers and peasants and priests, all welded together in melodramatic style, such as the people love. While the usual love element is absent, it is nevertheless a factor in the drama. Plays two hours. 25 cents.

The main fault of the above plays for males is that they were written for college lads by their professors, and have more costume and elocution in them than incident and action. Whether they reach the average parochial audience is a question, but as the story in each is good, and the setting of the stage fine, they will at least serve to train boys and young men for sound dramatic work.

PLAYS FOR FEMALE CHARACTERS

Dolores.

2 acts. 5 scenes. 15 characters. Plays two hours. A mild-mannered drama of two sisters, a cold-hearted mother, and various other characters. It is easy to stage and costume, and is liked by country audiences, chiefly for its emotional side. There is one male character, which can easily be played by a robust girl. A good play for beginners. Price, 50 cents.

Milkmaids' Convention.

A burlesque entertainment in one act for any number of characters. By introducing specialties may be made to last two hours. A good vehicle for amusing a club, or training young actors in dramatic work. Price, 25 cents.

Mystic Rose, The, or Pilate's Daughter.

The well-known Passion Play, produced by the Redemptorist parish in Boston for years as a Lenten devotion. 5 acts. 24 characters. Easy to present, but demands excellent scenery and costuming, and will take a long time to get into shape. Price, 50 cents.

Old Maids' Association.

A burlesque entertainment in one act. 15 to 50 characters. May be made short or long at will. Like its neighbor in this list, good for club show or

for a general audience, and for the training of young actors. Price, 25 cents.

Olga.

Domestic drama. 5 scenes. 2 males. 13 females. Although written by an amateur dramatist, this play interests an audience by its story. It provides beginners with a vehicle for training. Easy to costume and to present. Plays one hour and a half. Price, 25 cents.

Revolt, The.

A farce. 1 act. 8 characters. Plays one hour. An amusing skit on the modern woman, her battle for supremacy, and the ancient woman's school for domestic science and virtue. Price, 25 cents.

School of Sorrow, The.

Costume drama. 4 acts. 16 characters. Scenes are of New York City in the period of Washington's presidency. Martha Washington and Mrs. Carroll of Carrollton are characters. The story is like that of *The Two Orphans*, one sister a blind beggar, lost and helpless in the slums, the other seeking her everywhere. A model drama for capable amateur actors and easy to present, except that the costuming must be well done. Time, two hours. Price, 25 cents.

Woman's Convention, Punkville, U. S. A.

Another burlesque entertainment of the same

character as those above, may be made short or long, any number of characters, and funnier than most plays of this kind. Price, 25 cents.

Wanted, a Maid.

Comedy. 3 acts. 10 characters. A very good play of its kind, and will demand the best from a company, without overweighting them. Plays one hour and a half. Price, 25 cents.

Rosemary.

A drama in 4 acts. 14 characters. 1 scene for the four acts, either plain or elaborate. The cast includes two Southern girls, a prim Boston matron, a colored Mammy, an Irish maid, and a pair of twins, and therefore gives plenty of scope for character acting. Plays one hour and a half. May be lengthened by specialties. A charming play for girls. Price, 25 cents.

FARCES

Brian O'Linn.

A genuine Irish farce. 2 acts. 7 males. 4 females. Written forty years ago, but as fresh today as then. Its riotous humor endears it to parish audiences; but players will have to be careful not to offend modern Irish sentiment, which in many places rejects the wild fun of writers like Lover and Lever, on the ground that it misrepresents the Irish. This piece may be lengthened to fill

out a whole evening. In its present form it plays about one hour. Price, 15 cents.

Freezing a Mother-in-Law.

Polite farce. 1 act. 3 males. 2 females. Plays about an hour. An unusually entertaining play, suitable for average actors, and certain to be enjoyed by the parish audience. A new invention for throwing cattle into a state of suspended animation is tried upon the old lady with great success apparently. She is frozen stiff, placed in a closet, and left there while the family enjoys an hour of cheerful freedom. The denouement is both funny and painful. Price, 15 cents.

Fun in a Photograph Gallery.

Farcical entertainment for any number of characters. While amusing an audience it will serve as a vehicle for young actors. Can be lengthened or shortened at pleasure. Simple scenery and costumes. Price, 15 cents.

Handy Andy.

Irish farce in 2 acts. 10 males. 3 females. It is written in old-fashioned style, and has too many scenes to an act; but this defect can be remedied by an expert stage director. The costuming should be good. It is not a play for the inexperienced. In spite of its age has a stronger appeal to parish audiences than any modern farce. Time, nearly two hours. Price, 15 cents.

Hotel Half-Back.

Eccentric farce. 1 scene. 8 characters. Plays one hour. May be lengthened by introducing specialties. An ingenious, funny, tricky play, full of surprises, good for a club, or as a curtain-raiser, but demanding good players and thorough rehearsals. Price, 15 cents.

The Private Secretary.

Polite farce. 3 acts. 9 males. 4 females. Plays two hours. Royalty play. Modern costume. The most successful farce of modern times. Clean, serious, and so funny that people get ill from laughing. Demands a fine company of amateur actors, and plenty of rehearsal. Should not be attempted by any others. Price, 50 cents.

What Happened to Jones.

Polite farce. 3 acts. 7 males. 6 females. Plays two and a half hours. It is of the same character as the preceding. Demands a good company, with plenty of rehearsal. Modern costume. Easy to stage. Almost the funniest farce written. A royalty play. Price, 50 cents.

MUSICAL FARCES**Buttermilk Hollow Surprise Party.**

Entertainment in one act. 25 characters and more if desired. Plays as long as wanted. Country costumes of the simplest kind, room for all kinds of specialties, with dialogue enough to go through

an evening. A splendid vehicle for clubs and for training young actors. Price, 25 cents.

Deestrick Skule.

Entertainment of the same sort. Seven grown-ups and any number of children. Introduction of specialties. Suitable for a school, a club, or a dramatic company. Price, 25 cents.

Indian Days.

A tuneful farce in one act. 5 characters, any number in the chorus. Indian costumes. Leading actors must be singers. Plays about an hour, but can be easily drawn out to two. The leading lady is named Pocahontas McGuigan McGuire, and is supposed to be of Irish blood. Care must be taken to avoid offence to sensitive Irish people, who object altogether to burlesquing Irish characters. An amusing and picturesque sketch without thought of harm in it. Price, 50 cents.

In the Ferry House.

The scene requires a drop and appurtenances peculiar to the entrance to a ferry. Any number of characters, and more may be added. Under a good manager this sketch may be made a most uproarious farce, and will give both audience and actors an amusing two hours. Price, 25 cents.

Jayville Junction.

An entertainment of same character as the Ferry House. The scene is a railroad depot interior,

with trains late. 28 characters, among them the station agent, the baggage man, the train caller, the porter, and the lunch counter girl; the travelers are actors, college boys, farmers, drummers, and a bridal pair, along with others. While the fun is constant, there is much of the ordinary life about a junction station, and this affords place for sentiment. The play makes a splendid vehicle for training actors. Plays any length of time. Price, 25 cents.

Rustic Minstrel Show.

11 characters. Plays any length of time desired. This is a variation of the colored minstrel show, in which the characters are of various nationalities, and the chorus is composed of haymakers. It is funny, easy to produce, and picturesque. Price, 25 cents.

Rustic Romeo.

A musical farce. 2 acts. 20 characters. One of the best, perhaps the best, of its kind. Written for amateurs specially, with knowledge of their needs. Full of fun, with music, movement, and makes a fine impression on audiences. Easy to produce, rich in color, and requires good rehearsing. Two hours. Price, 50 cents.

Trial by Jury.

Gilbert and Sullivan's famous comic opera, in one act. 22 characters. One of the finest shows

for clubs. An amorous judge and susceptible jury, two lawyers, a court official, the defendant, and the plaintiff and her maids, fill the court scene wonderfully, and make enough fun for any audience. Plays over an hour, can be lengthened with specialties, owns finish and elegance, but must be rehearsed with care. Price, one dollar.

READY REFERENCE LIST

ONE AND TWO ACT PLAYS

	A.	Hrs.	M.	F.
Andy Blake. Irish Comedy. Costume.....	2	1½	4	3
Bishop's Candlesticks, The. Costume.....	1	1	3	2
Everyman. Morality play. Costume.....	1	2	16	2
Everyyouth. Morality play.....	1	2	7	6
Everysoul. Morality play.....	1	2	10	7
The King's Threshold, On. Poetic Irish drama.	1	2	12	4
Mary, Queen of Scots. Costume.....	2	2	7	7
Rip Van Winkle. Costume.....	2	2	8	3
Whiskers. Polite farce.....	1	1½	3	7

THREE ACT PLAYS

Bill the Coachman. Polite farce.....	2	5	4
Burley's Ranch. Cowboy and military.....	3	10	4
Colleen Bawn, The. Irish romantic.....	3	8	6
Country Kid, A. Rural.....	2	6	3
Enlisted for the War. Military.....	3	7	3
End of the Rainbow. College.....	2½	6	14
Erin Go Bragh. Irish romantic.....	2	5	4
Four-Leaved Shamrock. Irish comedy.....	2	3	4
Heart of a Shamrock. Irish modern.....	2	4	4
In the Shadow of the Rockies. Miners.....	2	8	3
Just Plain Folks. New England domestic.....	2½	6	4
Little Lord Fauntleroy. High society.....	3	8	3
Little Princess, The.....	3	6	15

	Hrs.	M.	F.
New Partner, The. Labor and capital.....	3	8	4
Oak Farm. Domestic.....	2½	7	3
Pottersville Postoffice, At the. Rural.....	2	9	8
Robert Emmet. Irish historical. Costume....	2	10	2
Stubborn Motor Car, The. Western mining...	2½	7	4
Shaun Aroon. Irish modern.....	2	7	3
Time of His Life, The. Polite farce.....	2	6	3
Tompkins' Hired Man. Rural domestic	2	4	4
Wolsey. Historical. Costume.....	2	10	2

FOUR ACT PLAYS

Along the Missouri. Western rural.....	3	6	3
Corner Store, The. Rural.....	2½	6	3
Down the Black Cañon. Miners.....	2	11	3
Dust of the Earth, The. Rural.....	2½	6	4
Farm Folks. Rural.....	2½	4	7
Frozen Trail, The. Alaskan.....	2½	8	3
Home Ties. Domestic.....	2½	4	5
Hazel Kirke. High society.....	3	9	4
In Plum Valley. Rural.....	2	6	4
Kathleen Mavourneen. Irish romantic.....	2½	11	4
Liberty Corners. Rural and humorous.....	3	12	5
Mountain Waif, The. Mining camp.....	2½	9	3
Miss Mosher of Colorado. High society.....	2	5	3
Noble Outcast, A. High society.....	2½	4	3
Prisoner of Andersonville. Military.....	2½	10	4
Uncle Rube. Rural.....	2½	8	3
Up Vermont Way. Rural.....	3	8	4
Wahnaton. Frontier Indian.....	2½	9	4
Village Lawyer, The. Domestic.....	2½	6	5

FIVE ACT PLAYS

Celebrated Case, A. Costume and court.....	3	7	5
Deacon, The. Rural.....	2½	8	6

READY REFERENCE LIST

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	A.	Hrs.	M.	F.
Experience. Morality play. Costume.....	3	10	8	
Fabiola. Christian Martyr.....	3	8	6	
Lone Tree Mine. Mining camp.....	3	10	4	
Man from Maine, The. Criminals.....	2½	9	3	
Octoroon, The. Southern slave.....	2½	14	6	
Richelieu. Costume and court.....	3	8	2	
Roses of St. Dorothy. Costume religious.....	2	4	5	
Uncle Tom's Cabin. Southern slave.....	2½	7	5	

PLAYS FOR MALES

Christopher Columbus. Historical. Costume..	4	1½	12	
Falsely Accused. English modern.....	4	2	25	
Hermigild. Costume religious.....	5	3	16	
Making of Larry, The. Boy Scout.....	2	1½	10	
Proscribed Heir, The. Costume.....	3	1½	9	
Riding the Goat. Burlesque initiation.....	1	1	10	
Calvary. A Passion play. Costume.....	7	3	28	
Prophecy, The. Costume.....	4	2	17	
Up Caesar's Creek. Club and camp minstrels..	3	1½	11	
Under the Flag, Military Cuban.....	5	2½	13	
Vacation. Camp play.....	2	1½	11	

PLAYS FOR FEMALES

Dolores. Easy domestic comedy.....	2	1½	15	
Milkmaids' Convention. Burlesque.....	1	2	25	
Mystic Rose, The. Passion play. Costume... 5	3	24		
Old Maids' Association. Burlesque.....	1	2	25	
Olga. Domestic drama.....	5	2	15	
Revolt, The. Polite farce.....	1	1	8	
Rosemary. Domestic play.....	4	1½	14	
School of Sorrow, The. Costume drama.....	4	2	16	
Wanted, A Maid. Comedy.....	3	1½	10	
Woman's Convention at Punkville. Burlesque.	1	2	25	

FARCES

	A.	Hrs.	M.	F.
Brian O'Linn. Irish.....	2	1½	7	4
Charlie's Aunt. Modern.....				
Freezing a Mother-in-law. Modern.....	1	1	3	2
Fun in a Photograph Gallery. Sketch.....	1	2	10	10
Handy Andy. Noted Irish farce.....	1	1½	10	3
Hotel Half-back. Modern eccentric.....	1	1	8	2
Private Secretary, The. Polite English.....	3	2½	9	4
What Happened to Jones. Polite American....	3	2½	7	6

MUSICAL FARCE

Buttermilk Hollow Surprise party.....	1	2	10	10
Deestrick Skule, The. An exhibition.....	1	2	11	9
Indian Days. Burlesque Indian Irish.....	1	2	10	8
In the Ferry House. Eccentric sketch.....	1	1½	10	10
Jayville Junction. Eccentric sketch.....	1	2	15	13
Rustic Minstrel Show.....	1	2	10	5
Rustic Romeo.....	2	2	10	10
Trial by Jury.....	1	1½	17	5

Any of these plays may be obtained from

Dick & Fitzgerald, 16 Vesey St., New York City.

Samuel French, 28 West 38th St., New York City.

Dramatic Publishing Co., 542 So. Dearborn St., Chicago.

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